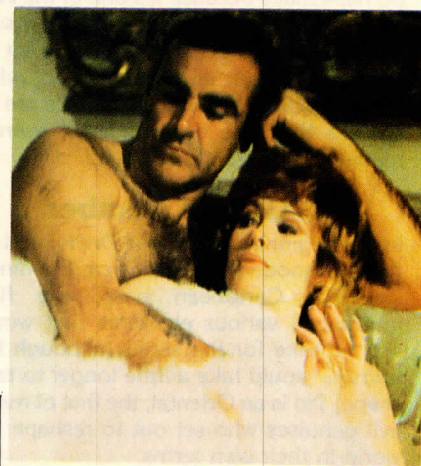


JAMES BOND: A

Bond has two new assignments this summer, and his old ones are available for inspection





License to Thrill

by Harvey Elliott

“The name is Bond. James Bond.” Sound familiar? It should. That’s the way secret agent 007 has introduced himself in a dozen different movies over the last 20 years.

The most successful film series of all time has seen many faces change and some disappear entirely, but Bond remains Bond: immutably cool, resourceful, sexually aggressive, witty, impeccably dressed — a gentleman spy who always comes out on top. In more ways than one.

The Bond video collection is now two-thirds complete and the moviegoing public is anxiously awaiting not one but two big-screen Bond adventures to be released soon.

Octopussy is the latest Broccoli-Bond production and, incidentally, the last Ian Fleming title to be filmed. (It will not necessarily be the last Bond picture, however. An agreement with the Fleming estate assures producer Albert “Cubby” Broccoli of the right to invent new adventures for 007 as long as the estate approves the scripts.)

Connery’s Back

Separately (and most independently) rival producer Kevin McClory is recycling *Thunderball*, one of the only two Fleming titles not owned by Broccoli, in *Never Say Never Again*. It’s another Caribbean

adventure with something old as well as something new: the revisionist James Bond will show his age, face doubts, and find that there just might not be a place for daredevil spies in the crimped bureaucracy of Britain today.

Reassuringly, Bond will once again be played by Sean Connery, who ankleed the series 12 years ago and who, until now, has resisted all attempts to return to it (hence the new movie’s title). So Connery’s back, and McClory’s got him, and Broccoli’s angry, and Roger Moore’s unperturbed. And it’ll be a good summer for Bond watchers.

For those who are not glued to their home screens, that is. Because there’s now enough bottled Bond for real 007 fanatics to live and relive their fantasies forever.

It’s interesting to watch Bond progress from a straightforward secret agent to a gadget demonstrator, from a rough-hewn hirsute Scotsman to a latter-day Etonian who looks as if he were born in a tuxedo.

His relationships with women, formerly treated as pitstops on the road to the finish line, begin to reflect the temper of the times as the series ages: brains enter alongside beauty, and Bond seems to respect them all the more for that. Even his one-liners — caustic commentaries on a particularly harrowing incident or narrow escape — take on, through

repetition (they *are* repeated) the familiarity of a close friend’s favourite phrases. Just as one wouldn’t remind a wife or a pal that you’ve heard “that story” before, it would be less than loyal for us to count the times Bond, in *coitus interruptus*, excuses himself with “something’s come up.”

They’re great entertainment, these Bond films. Despite a lag at midpoint, the whole series, viewed chronologically, is like an epic pop adventure — a *Nicholas Nickleby* for the late 20th century. Villains every bit as colourful as Dickens’ are pitted against the resources of 007; some favourites even reappear sporadically to provide continuity.

Some films refer to others, others tactfully ignore predecessors that provide plotlines and stunts to repeat. And old friends like “M” and “Q” and Moneypenny are as inevitable as the zithery theme song, opening gunsight logo with the blast of gunfire and wash of blood, and trademark Maurice Binder visuals against which the opening credits and destined-for-the-charts title song are played.

What does one remember most about individual Bond films? — that song, for one, definitely the girls, the villains in most instances, the gadgets, and in later years all those incredibly choreographed stunts. Video preserves all of these and

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though most of the films were shot in widescreen, the scanning procedure which makes possible a transfer to the TV screen's different dimensions has served the Bond adventures well.

Only one, *The Spy Who Loved Me*, loses highlights around the edges, but perhaps that's because it's one of the best and one is conscious of a visual excitement that makes one not want to miss anything at all. The credit crawl is squeezed, but the Binder graphics are so stylised that one easily adapts, even if reading the names is difficult.

Evil Genius Number 1

In the beginning there was *Dr No*, and *Dr No* was good. Set in Jamaica, Fleming's longtime Caribbean base, the film introduced various elements that would set the tone for the series (although the humour would take a little longer to take shape). No is an Oriental, the first of many evil geniuses who set out to reshape the world in their own terms.

No's method was through "toppling" of American missiles launched from nearby Cape Canaveral; the deflection of their trajectory could give No control over their targets, and so he could pit country against country in a misbegotten warfare that would later become a recurring theme in the Bond movies. No's sponsor was SPECTRE, an apolitical organisation whose acronym stood for Special Executive for Counter-Intelligence, Terrorism, Revenge, and Extortion. In simple terms, it played Russia off against the United States so it could jump into the breach with its own macabre plans for world domination.

Dr No also introduced "M", James Bond's superior at the home office of the British Secret Service. As played by Bernard Lee, he grew increasingly flustered at Bond's womanising and especially at his casual attitude toward defying death.

Miss Money Penny was "M"'s secretary, eternally flirting with 007 and hoping she'd be next in line for his romantic favours. She hasn't made it to bed with Bond yet, though Lois Maxwell as Money Penny is the only actor who has appeared in all the legitimate (that is, Broccoli-produced) Bonds so far; Bernard Lee died just before the filming of the 1981 *For Your Eyes Only*.

Richard Maibaum co-wrote the screenplay for *Dr No* and he is as responsible for the screen Bond as anyone connected with the series; later,



To many, Connery remains the 'real' James Bond.



whenever Broccoli got into trouble with the next plot or stunt or development, Maibaum would be called in to work on the script.

Even more than Sean Connery, Maibaum became the man Bond couldn't do without. John Barry wrote the musical score, as well as the signature James Bond theme. Later, even when Barry wasn't on board the theme was retained. *Dr No* had no title song and was the only Bond film without one. Jamaican standards were cleverly worked into the soundtrack for the opening credits, and the rest of the film relied mainly on Barry's 2½-minute Bond theme.

Among the major credits for *Dr No* was that of Ken Adam, production designer. He was responsible for much of the look the James Bond films would acquire: sleek, futuristic, sinister, and united by monorails, elevators, and pools of deadly fish or reptiles. If Maibaum is responsible for giving Bond the words that made him a familiar character, Adam must be credited for the lavish physical world that would be so hard for imitators to duplicate. For *Dr No* it was the Doctor's island laboratory of Crab Key, where he installed technology to subvert America's missile plans. The reactor room set the tone for future climactic Bond battles.

Finally, the behind-the-camera team was completed by editor Peter Hunt, who crystallised the fast-chase/quick-cut/love-scene/snappy-rejoinder tempo earlier films would perfect. He later ended up directing a Bond film himself, and his editor (for *On Her Majesty's Secret Service*), John Glen, would eventually direct *For Your Eyes Only* in a logical step that Broccoli foresaw as good adventure sense.

Before the cameras was Sean Connery, a Scotsman who had made a couple of low-budget British films and one Walt Disney feature and who was catapulted to world fame when he first appeared in the opening sequence of *Dr No* beside a beautiful woman at a gambling table and lit a cigarette for her, identifying himself as "Bond. James Bond." Connery would

become so popular as to seem indispensable; he wasn't, as the present popularity of Roger Moore confirms — but for many, Connery *was* Bond and forever shall be.

Bond's first prolonged relationship on screen — one doesn't really count the lady in the casino, nor other "objects" in his investigatory path — was statuesque Ursula Andress (then wife of John Derek), who emerged from the Caribbean in a skintight bathing suit after more than half of *Dr No* had elapsed but remains one of the film's most enduring images.

After No is destroyed and the world is saved (for the first time) by Bond, he and the girl, Honey Ryder, are drifting peacefully atop the waves when a rescue mission arrives and notes that they're not exactly panting for rescue. They are, in fact, having sex — a coda that would appear in all the Bond films as the anticlimax. The motif of sex while adrift would recur again and again, and even when *Moonraker* took Bond to outer space, they were still drifting (so to speak) when "M" and the rescue troops discovered them *in flagrante delicto*.

Starting with *Dr No* and carrying the series forward were these and other talents and motifs. Whenever a film strayed too far from the clever, sexy, and viscerally thrilling, the series took a slight nosedive although no legitimate Bond film has ever been a major commercial failure.

A word about legitimacy: Of the two Fleming titles that Broccoli's former co-producer Harry Saltzman failed to tie up in their now-and-forever contract, *Thunderball* was eventually made under their auspices after Kevin McClory, sensing that he needed Connery, joined forces with the official Bond producers.

The other title, Fleming's first novel *Casino Royale*, was turned into an all-star spoof by Edward Feldman with several people playing several Bonds — Woody Allen and David Niven among the disparate types — and the idea just didn't work. Since the 007 series was already something of a spoof to begin with, a self-

conscious parody made no sense; *Casino*'s best forgotten. Columbia has no plans to release it on home video, but who knows what this summer's Bond-mania may bring?

For the videophile and prospective Bond collector, here's a little refresher memo in which you may find your favourite title and proceed from there. The Chronological Bond can be great fun, with each entry serving as a two-hour episode in some gigantic serial in which everyone, including the world at large, ages 20 years.

Bondography

□ **Dr No** (1962). Connery, Andress, Jamaica; see above. It is 111 minutes long, for rent from Warners.

□ **From Russia With Love** (1963). Some say the best. Terence Young (director of *Dr No*) again at the helm. SPECTRE's motives introduced via Siamese Fighting Fish.

The song is crooned by Matt Munro as Bond and Daniela Bianchi float in a Venetian gondola. Two great villains: Robert Shaw as the blond and muscular assassin, and Lotte Lenya as Rosa Klebb, a Soviet defector working for SPECTRE who has spikes in the toes of her shoes.

A terrifically exciting train sequence aboard the Orient Express from Istanbul. The first of the signature precredit sequences, a self-contained mini-adventure that cuts abruptly into the theme song against undulating graphics. Introduction of "Q", who is responsible for the gadgets that would play an increasingly large role in Bond's exploits, played with great charm by Desmond Llewelyn. The first of many boat chases. Introduction of Blofeld, the head of SPECTRE, seen only as a closeup of hands stroking a white Persian cat. Production design by Syd Cain, who was rooted more in realism than Ken Adam. Consequently *From Russia With Love* is less futuristic than any Bond film and the last of the so-called "straight" Bond

Between the demise of Lazenby and the rise of Moore, Connery returned in Diamonds are Forever.

adventures.

118 mins. Rental only from Warners.

□ **Goldfinger** (1964). Shirley Eaton painted gold from tip to toe. That's the image that remains — that and Shirley Bassey's piercing rendition of John Barry's title tune.

The plot is an offshoot: SPECTRE isn't involved, only a maverick madman named Goldfinger who plots to corner the market on gold and then expose the American gold supply at Fort Knox to radiation to boost prices for his own stores. His aide is a distinctly mannish pilot named Pussy Galore who swears she is "immune" to James Bond's advances. She isn't, and sex saves the day.

Honor Blackman is a memorable Pussy, and her name sets the style for the rest of the film, with tongue firmly in cheek. Prime villain: Gert Froebe as Auric Goldfinger. Most fun villain: his servant Oddjob (Harold Sakata), whose killer derby decapitates statues and turns out to be his own undoing. Introduction of the Aston Martin, Bond's gimmick-laden car, complete with ejector seat. Adam designed an imaginary Fort Knox for the finale.

Curious note: Bond is more spectator than hero. It's Pussy who saves the day with her change in allegiance, and Bond really walks into more traps than he sets. But no one seemed to notice. It was a huge success.

108 mins. Rental only from Warners.

□ **Thunderball** (1965). Sharks, atom bombs, the Caribbean again. Bond flying through the air with a jet-propelled airpack on his back. SPECTRE hijacks an airplane carrying two nuclear warheads and holds the free world for ransom.

Lots of underwater photography, which would become a hallmark for the later films in the series, and which won *Thunderball* a special-effects Oscar. Title tune sung by Tom Jones; production design, Ken Adam; director, Terence Young again, after introducing Guy Hamilton to the series with *Goldfinger*.

Water takes on an even more sensual meaning for Bond as his courtship of Domino (Claudine Auger) begins and is seemingly consummated underwater. (The producers had wanted Julie Christie but decided her bust was too small; Raquel Welch was signed, but wanted out for *Fantastic Voyage* instead; they even flirted with Faye Dunaway.)

No really baroque villain here, just a brawny Italian named Largo who's acting for SPECTRE. It's a long film, and somewhat repetitive. But coral reefs, a breakaway yacht, a colourful Bahamian street parade, and the shark peril (predating *Jaws*) continued the tidal wave of 007's success.

Not yet available on cassette in Australia.

□ **You Only Live Twice** (1967). The first time Connery said "this is the last time."

One of the weakest entries due to a rather simple plot about a strange spaceship swallowing up American and Russian missiles to set the two countries against one another (the old SPECTRE ploy). Bond's investigation leads him to Japan and an elaborate volcanic launching station manned by Blofeld.

Ken Adam outdid himself in production design, however, for the volcano set is lavish and detailed, a perfect setting for the rousing *denouement*. Blofeld is finally seen — Donald Pleasance with a great makeup job highlighting a terrible facial scar — and Bond gets married, though not seriously (as he would later). He "goes Japanese" and, as part of the disguise, takes a wife on an island near the laboratory to infiltrate the community. She's understanding, and a pretty sprightly agent herself.

Nancy Sinatra sings the title song, which became more popular than the movie. A portable helicopter, "Little Nellie", involves us in a spectacular aerial chase.

Lewis Gilbert directed this Bond, his first, and he hadn't gotten the hang of it. Peter Hunt wasn't editing. When the picture came in too long, Hunt was called in to rescue it — probably why he ended up directing the next one.

117 mins. Rental from Warners.

□ **On Her Majesty's Secret Service** (1969). Goodbye Sean Connery, hello George Lazenby (George who?) — an Australian model who made even the props look animated.

Well, he filled the gap. His only Bond film, and a transition one for the producers, abandoned most of the gimmicks and went back to a more or less straight spy story, with some three-dimensional characterisation too.

Bond falls in love with Tracy (played by Diana Rigg, obviously one of the Bond

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series' classiest leading ladies), marries her, and loses her when she dies at picture's end.

Director Hunt's work in the Alps — with a spectacular skiing and toboggan sequence that stands among the series' best — proved him a more than able action director, and Rigg made it Bond's most authentic human adventure as well. Telly Savalas played Blofeld, Maibaum was back on the script, and Syd Cain designed the story about Blofeld's attempt to control the world through germ warfare.

Lots of witty references to the fact that this was a different-looking James Bond than people were used to, and John Barry's score was among his best. Louis Armstrong sang "We Have All The Time in the World", which hangs a label on this, the most romantic of all Bond adventures.

Not yet available.

□ **Diamonds Are Forever** (1971). Connery did come back this once for the lightest of all his Bond films.

Shirley Bassey once again on the title song, Guy Hamilton directing, and Jill St John as the bright, sassy redhead who starts out with the opposition but, changes sides as soon as Bond beds her.

Two gay hitmen are probably the most comic villains Bond will ever encounter, but the humour is forced and the characters overstay their welcome. A Howard Hughes character (played by

Moore tried to out-womanize Connery.



Boats, cars, planes, guns and girls are the essential elements of the formula.

singer Jimmy Dean) is the innocent dupe in another SPECTRE plot, this one to corner the market on diamonds, which would be hoisted to space as the magnifying agent for the world's strongest laser beam.

Another beat-the-clock finale.

Gaudy Las Vegas setting, with Natalie Wood's busty kid sister Lana playing a brief fling of Bond's who ends up tied to a block of cement at the bottom of a swimming pool. A spectacular ending on an oil rig in the Pacific, with Ken Adam working his usual magic with production design. The first of many car chases which would come to dominate the second decade of Bond's screen career.

119 mins. Rental from Warners.

□ **Live and Let Die** (1973). Meet Roger Moore, formerly of TV's *The Saint*.

This James Bond, still the "official" 007, plays it entirely for laughs, at least in the beginning. Not for him the rumpled suit. The one-liners beginning to get tedious, because that's all there is to Bond: he is something of a fatuous bore, great in bed but hardly the he-man hero we expected from Connery.

The tuxedo, the caviar, the champagne are the dominant features of this Bond, and technology and motorised vehicular excitement take all the focus from a man who admittedly has inherited a pretty difficult assignment.

Hamilton directed; Paul McCartney and Wings gave the title tune a contemporary but classic sound, and Syd Cain's design was something of a letdown after what we had come to expect from Adam. Blaxploitation, too, in terms of villains, who take us from Harlem to New Orleans and back to the Caribbean in a miasma of voodoo and racial terror.

Jane Seymour is a tarot-reading princess enthroned by the powerful Kananga (Yaphet Kotto). The motif is drugs, and the whole affair smacks too much of trendy topic-seeking. More boat and car chases and the introduction of the most irritating character in the whole series — a redneck sheriff who is loud and stupid and who the producers found hysterically funny. He isn't.

121 mins. Rental from Warners.

□ **The Man with the Golden Gun** (1974). The weakest in the series.

The Southern sheriff is back, just as tedious as before. Bond's girlfriend is Britt Ekland (his secretary Mary Goodnight) and her acting does nothing to perk up the proceedings. Scaramanga and his dwarf manservant Nick Nack (Christopher Lee and Herve Villechaize) aren't forbidding; their island retreat looks comfortable, in fact.

The funhouse motif for the final shootout is spoiled by our having seen a virtual frame-by-frame preview of the whole sequence in the opening precredit segment. This is the lone Bond adventure to have an unexciting last half-hour. Only the scenery, a beautiful clump of islands off Thailand, make it memorable.

The best stunt is a spiral car jump across a canal, but it has the look of having been observed first and worked into the screenplay later. The karate scenes seemed to derive from the popular kung-fu films, but Bond fans were not primarily kung-fu audiences. A nice touch: the half sunken hull of the Queen Elizabeth serving as British Intelligence's headquarters in Hong Kong harbour.

125 mins. Rental from Warners.

□ **The Spy Who Loved Me** (1977). The series was invigorated by this entry, which starts with the most dazzling stunt in all Bonddom: a ski chase that culminates in Bond's skiing off the side of a mountain, floating freefall through the air, tossing off his skis, and pulling the cord on a parachute (decorated with the Union Jack) that brings him down to earth. It's breathtaking and funny and a burst of energy in a tired old series.

Bond's opposite number, a Russian spy named XXX (Barbara Bach), matches his sleuthing step-for-step in a competition for a nuclear tracking device developed by a madman (Curt Jurgens) who is disillusioned with mankind and wants to start all over again underwater with his own privately selected population. XXX falls in love with 007 of course (hence the title), but there is an additional human subplot: Bond has assassinated XXX's lover in the precredit sequence, and she had vowed revenge. It is only after she is



already in love with Bond that she finds out he is the man who did it.

Carly's Simon's rendition of the Marvin Hamlisch title song is the best in the whole series, and so are Maurice Binder's credit visuals. Most fortunately, Moore has relaxed and become his own James Bond. The Egyptian scenery is exquisite too, and the best villain in the series, a seven-foot fellow with iron teeth named Jaws, is introduced.

Not yet available in Australia.

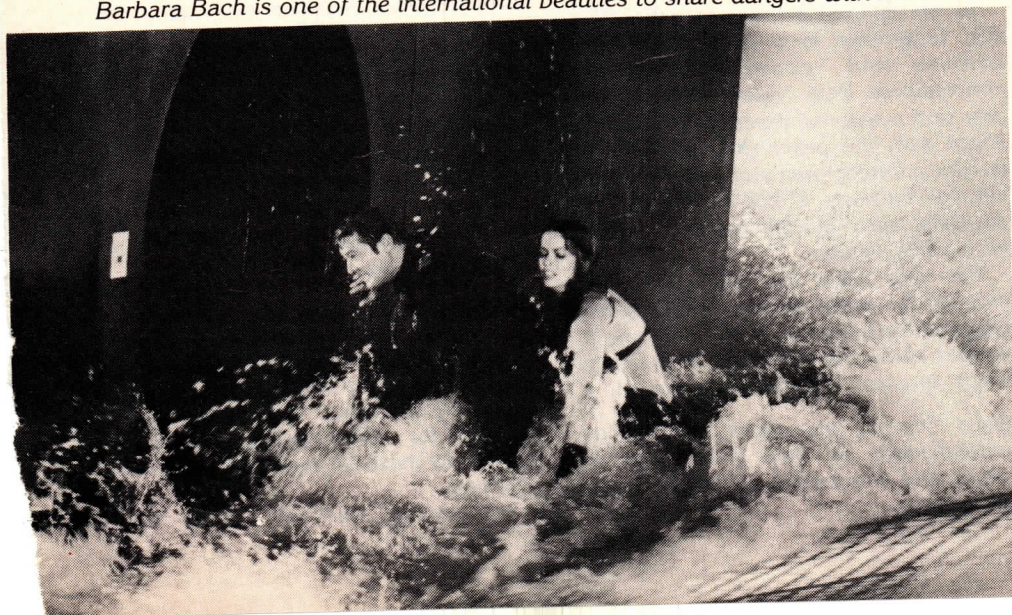
❑ **Moonraker** (1979). Virtually the same story as the last one, with a plot to eliminate mankind.

This time the maniac takes to outer space where he has flown his homegrown master race to a space station of his own invention (complete with radar-jamming system, so no one knows it's there). Now he plans to send globes full of nerve gas hurtling towards the earth, 50 of them, so that all at once he will release the gas, depopulate the earth, and send his blond gods and goddesses down to start afresh.

Capitalising on *Star Wars* and other galactic adventures, Broccoli (Saltzman had sold his share of the series after *Man with the Golden Gun*) had Ken Adam whip up some shuttle sets. After some dallying around on earth — most vividly with another boat chase ending surprisingly with some deft hanggliding on the part of 007 — the film transports Bond and his NASA/CIA counterpart (played amateurishly by Lois Chiles, creating a void where a romance should have been) to the space station. But at least the indestructible Jaws is back. In a Frankenstein-inspired subplot, he falls in love and turns respectable.

Movie in-jokes (which had begun in the previous film with a music box at the Russian spy's bedside table playing "Lara's Theme" from *Doctor Zhivago* when opened) continue here, but become thinner and thinner. How does one satirise *The Empire Strikes Back*? The director should have learned his lesson from *Casino Royale*.

Barbara Bach is one of the international beauties to share dangers with Bond.



126 mins. Rental from Warners.

❑ **For Your Eyes Only** (1981). Back to square one.

First of all, Earth. Second, gadgets take a backseat to adventure and intrigue. The real Bond fans loved this one, which harked back to poisoned dart guns and simple assassinations and left world-domination plots in its wake.

Once again a missile tracking system provides the impetus for a spy story with Bond racing the smugglers to an underwater wreck (ah! more sharks and coral) to reclaim an indispensable espionage tool. The final adventure sequence, which has Bond and his allies scaling a vertical cliff to bring the villains to their knees, is physical adventure more in the style of *The Guns of Navarone* than a Bond adventure.

Carole Bouquet, one of Luis Bunuel's leading ladies and definitely the most esoteric heroine ever cast in a Bond adventure, is exotic and beautiful and bent on her own revenge plot against the villains who had killed her parents.

The underwater photography, amongst a sunken temple around the coastline of Greece, is spectacular, and editor John Glen was the right choice as the director. The only missing ingredient is "M", but Money Penny (now a tolerant spinster) holds up the home front admirably.

127 mins. Rental from Warners.

☆ ☆ ☆

There it is: a home library for the shelves where Fleming's books used to sit. Not quite the same, but this is the video generation. One more note on books: a fascinating armchair companion to the complete Bonds is Steven Jay Rubin's *The Films of James Bond*, published by Arlington House. It'll tell you everything you've ever wanted to know about who and when and how, with detailed descriptions of stunts and setups. With the review button at the ready and Rubin's book to guide you, you just might figure out, like James Bond, how everything was done. ■

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